

United States Public Health
Service
V. D. Folder No. 4!

The Doctor Says

...a blood test before marriage
is good health insurance



"So you've come to get your blood tests?" Doctor Crawford smiled at the young couple across his desk. "I've been expecting you two kids since your engagement was announced. Have to get your certificates under the new State law, don't you? It's a good plan, the blood test law."

"I think it's silly!" exclaimed Marian. "Why, we couldn't be healthier! Besides, we've known each other all our lives! And you know **us**, doctor. You don't think we have syphilis?"

"To look at you, I'd call you a healthy pair." The doctor's eyes twinkled. "Marian's a little on the thin side. John could use more exercise. But syphilis . . . Just looking at you, I can't know for sure. The blood test tells me.

"Now I have a patient you'd call healthy, I guess. A young woman with a year old baby. She has syphilis, but didn't know it until her baby was born, a sickly little thing infected with the disease. She passed it on to her child through her infected blood that fed the unborn baby. If those young people had had blood tests before marriage, the wife could have been treated first. They would have been saved a lot of grief."

"Gosh, I didn't know you could have anything that bad and not know it. How can that happen?"

"Syphilis is a sneaky thing, John. You two know that it is usually caught during sex contact. But the early signs can be so mild that people don't suspect they have the disease. A sore comes first at the place where syphilis entered the body. It will heal whether you do anything about it or not. A rash may break out later on any part of the body. It may seem harmless. It goes away along with other mild troubles like sore throat, headaches.

"But **syphilis** doesn't go away. Once it gets in the body, it is there to stay . . . unless good treatment stops it.

"Yes, a man or woman with syphilis can be apparently healthy. But syphilis is at work in the blood stream, attacking the heart, the brain, the nervous system.

"Years later . . . 10, 15 years or even longer . . . syphilis may strike those vital organs.

"Sometimes it doesn't show up in a child born with syphilis until years later. Imagine the horror of having your bright young son or daughter go to pieces around high school age and spend the rest of his life in a mental hospital . . . all because of unsuspected, untreated syphilis!

"Oh, yes, that can happen! We doctors see syphilis in forms you'd never dream of. Take one of my heart patients, a good husband and father, 46 years old. Collapsed one day at the dinner table and hasn't been able to work since. He's a 'heart cripple' because of syphilis. Picked it up sometime or other in his youth, but never knew it. If he'd had a blood test and good treatment earlier, he wouldn't be on the shelf today."

"It can drive people crazy, too, can't it, doctor?"

"Yes, very often untreated syphilis shows up in broken minds, paralysis, and other nervous diseases. But that needn't happen if syphilis is discovered and treated in the early stages.

"Now let's get at these blood tests. Roll up your sleeve, John.

"Doctors haven't had a reliable test for syphilis very long," he went on. "Before the blood test we had to see syphilis when the sores were there to look at. Or we had to wait until the tragic later effects appeared to give us clues. Now with the blood test, we can catch syphilis in the early stages when treatment is most successful. Good treatment keeps it from spreading to others and cures the patient, too."

Doctor Crawford tied a piece of rubber snugly around John's upper arm. "This keeps the blood from circulating," he explained. "Lets the veins fill up. Makes it easier to reach the vein with this hollow needle. The glass syringe draws the blood sample up through the needle. There! Got it the first time." He withdrew the needle and rubbed a small puncture on John's arm.

"Is **that** all?" asked Marian.

"That's all for John. You're next." He reached for another syringe.

"That wasn't as bad as running a pin in your finger," commented John, rolling down his sleeve. "Scarcely felt it. What happens now?"

"These special containers take the blood samples to the State laboratory. The State health department gives me the containers and does the laboratory work without cost. In about a week, I'll have reports on the tests."

"What will happen if either of our tests show syphilis?" Marian asked soberly. "Can't people who have syphilis ever marry?"

"Let's not cross bridges before we come to them," said Doctor Crawford. "If one test should be positive, many things would have to be considered. But it would **not** mean you two can never marry.

"Believe me, you have a better chance for happy marriage if you know for sure. You would never forgive yourselves if you took chances with unsuspected, untreated syphilis. The blood test is good health insurance before marriage."

"You're right," said John, thinking of what the doctor told them.

"I think so, too," agreed Marian. "We do want to make a good start."

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Marian and John were like thousands of other couples. What inter-

ested them most was getting married, earning a living, keeping house, raising a family. They were strong, happy, and not bothered about health laws. They had spent many hours planning how to get along on John's salary. And John had taken out life insurance.

But they hadn't known about another kind of insurance for marriage. Assurance that no unsuspected disease is present in either partner, ready to crop up later in costly, heartbreaking sickness.

The blood test for syphilis is one way to get this assurance.

Many States have laws requiring blood tests for couples when they apply for a marriage license . . . laws requiring a blood test for every pregnant woman.

The blood test is health protection for marriage . . . health protection for innocent children. Even if your State does not have a law, get this health protection for yourself. Get a blood test for syphilis before marriage . . . early in pregnancy . . . and with every general health examination.



Know For SURE About Syphilis

For more facts, read:

- **SYPHILIS—ITS CAUSE, ITS SPREAD, ITS CURE . . . the facts about syphilis.** V. D. Folder No. 1. \$1 per 100.
- **YOU CAN END THIS SORROW . . . the facts about syphilis in women.** V. D. Folder No. 3. \$1 per 100.
- **GONORRHEA THE CRIPPLER . . . the facts about gonorrhea.** V. D. Folder No. 5. \$1 per 100.
- **IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU . . . the story of syphilis in pictures—as a threat to every individual and family, as a drag on every taxpayer.** V. D. Bulletin No. 94. 5 cents each, \$3.75 per 100.

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